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Just Not Fast Enough

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Just Not Fast Enough

Glen Brown

I tied a league ball in it, roped it
around twice with jute twine and greased it
with Vaseline before putting it between
my mattress and box spring each fall.
By April, my baseball glove
molded for another season.

When spring came, the days rang:
"Hey, batter, batter; swing, batter, swing!"
I swung a Duke Snyder Adirondack,
but I was Louis Aparicio at the plate—
a singles hitter and fast,
a sure steal on the base paths.

In one game, the rain fouled-up
my fifth stealing attempt,
and second base became a buoy.
My father and I navigated
out of the bog in our new '64 Oldsmobile,
until he asked about my muddy spikes...

We torpedoed across traffic
and slid across shoals. He popped the trunk,
hurled my spikes high in the air.
I watched them descend,
the long, white laces twisting
in slow motion, my mitt tied to them.

They hit the street with a dull splash,
and I held my breath an instant,
an eternity; as if dreaming, I dodged
the gloom of headlights bearing down
in an attempt to swipe. The whole season
disappeared beneath a semi-trailer
five times.